

the community of Deadwood. And in South Dakota, I will tell my colleagues, we are open and ready for business. Those who like to vacation, we invite them to South Dakota. We have a number of wonderful family vacation attractions. It is very family-friendly. It is affordable. We have lakes and hills and bike trails, Mount Rushmore, Crazy Horse, many of the other great attractions that are unique to South Dakota. We want people of this country to come to our State and experience the wonderful beauty of it and take in many of the attractions that are available to them.

One thing that came out of this also, Mr. Speaker, and was reinforced, is that we need a change in forest policy in this country. Fires are a natural part of a forest system. We know that. But the intensity of those fires is not natural. We need to reduce the fuel loads that exist in places, in the Black Hills National Forest. We have seen fires in other parts of the country this year, but we have experienced firsthand fires in my State, and we have enormous loads of fuel on the ground in places that need to be reduced or we will be dealing with catastrophic fires throughout the course of the summer.

The Forest Service needs the authority to clear the dead trees that are creating the fuel loads that are presenting the risk of catastrophic fire. I have been trying now for several months to get a legislative solution in place that would give the Forest Service the tools they need to prevent catastrophic fires. Those efforts have been resisted to this point in the other body. Last week's fire should be a reminder and force us all to take another look at the policies in this country.

We have in this country, in my opinion, a big fire policy; as a result, we have big fires. We are seeing them burn in Arizona and Colorado and now South Dakota. We need reforms, Mr. Speaker, that will enable the Forest Service to address these incredible risks that exist in our forests today.

The Forest Service, 40 percent litigation and appeals; 40 percent of the dollars that we appropriate for the Forest Service are spent fighting lawsuits and appeals that are brought on by groups who are trying to prevent the Forest Service from doing what they know they need to do and what the public knows needs to be done to keep our forests healthy.

I urge my colleagues to work with those of us that live in areas that are at risk of catastrophic fire to make change in our policies that will protect the lives and the property of people of my State and others like it.

The Black Hills National Forest is South Dakota's treasure, but it is also America's treasure, and we need to treat it that way. Our State is experiencing historic droughts; that is a disaster. With that comes the risk of fire, fires that we know are going to be fre-

quent in years like this. But the intensity of those fires, Mr. Speaker, is something we can address. We have within our control the ability and the power to give the Forest Service the tools that they need, the authority they need to go in there and manage and treat these forests, to clear those dead trees and that dead timber in a way that will prevent these forest fires from happening in the future.

In one part of Beaver Park, which is in the Sturgis area of South Dakota, we have there 70 tons of fuel on the ground in an area where the average is 7 tons of fuel, primarily as a result of the pine beetle infestation which has been killing trees at a rampant pace. In the last couple of years, in 1999, there were 15,000 trees that were affected by the pine beetle. In 2001, that was 100,000 trees. Yet, because of lawsuits, because of litigation, because of appeals and dilatory tactics, the Forest Service is unable to go in and take the steps necessary to keep the lives and property of people safe and to make sure that our forests are healthy.

Mr. Speaker, today I ask my colleagues in this body to work with me to make the necessary changes to give the Forest Service the tools they need and the authority they need to do the job of keeping our forests safe, protecting our lives and property, and our forests healthy.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. ROSS) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. ROSS addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California (Mr. FILNER) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. FILNER addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PALLONE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. PALLONE addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from the District of Columbia (Ms. NORTON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Ms. NORTON addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

#### RAIDING THE SOCIAL SECURITY TRUST FUND

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Ohio (Ms. KAPTUR) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. KAPTUR. Mr. Speaker, I rise this evening to continue what has become my weekly clocking of the continuing Republican raid on our Nation's Social Security trust fund.

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Four weeks have passed since I first came to this floor, unveiled our debt clock and our debt graphs and started documenting the truth to the American people about the Social Security trust fund.

The truth is that House Republican leaders have turned their back on America's senior citizens and are raiding billions every day from our Social Security trust fund. When President Clinton left office, our Nation had finally moved into an annual balance of accounts, and we were yielding even a small surplus. Though we had a huge accumulated debt that we were beginning to pay off, our Nation's financial house was put in order.

What has happened in just a few years under Republican leadership is that we have begun now to amass huge additional debts nationally, and there is only one place where they are going to get the funds to pay for the war, to pay for the tax breaks that have been given to the wealthiest in this country and the corporate cowboys that we see now being brought before congressional committees, and that is, our Nation's Social Security trust fund.

Do the Republicans have a plan to stop this raid? No, they do not, and in fact, today, the total raid has run now to over \$235 billion. That averages out to about \$837 for every single American who will qualify for Social Security. When I first came to this floor 4 weeks ago, they dipped into the Social Security trust fund to a raid of \$208 billion, and in just 4 weeks, that has gone up an additional \$27 billion.

The Republicans in this institution, at least their leadership, are in avoidance, hoping to dodge this issue in the fall's election. They will not even allow a debate on Social Security reform because they know that their risky idea of privatization to try to cover up what is really going on with the accumulated trust funds will be exposed for what it is, and that is, a gamble, not a guarantee.

Just look at what has been happening in the stock market, if my colleagues want to know something about gambles. The American people deserve better. Our working families deserve better and our seniors deserve better.